

Jacob Helm House (Callahan House)
West side of U.S. Rte. 209, just south
of Sawkill Creek and Bushkill
Milford vicinity, Dingman Township
Pike County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1275

HABS
PA
52-MILE.V
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. PA-1275

JACOB HELM HOUSE (Callahan House)

Location:

West side of U.S. Rte. 209, just south of Sawkill Creek and Milford Borough boundary, in Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Milford vicinity, Dingman Township, Pike County, Pennsylvania.

USGS Milford Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.516700.4573740

Present Owner:

Douglas T. Callahan.

Present Use:

Dwelling.

Statement of Significance:

The Helm House is typical of the long, one-and-one-half story vernacular structures erected during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Late eighteenth century.
2. Original and subsequent owners: This is an incomplete chain of title.

1818 Deed: 20 August 1818 Recorded 21 Aug. 1818
Book 7, page 356
John Westbrook, Sheriff of Pike County,
to
James B. Armstrong
Consideration: \$175.
Acreage: 6 acres.
Grant: Writ of Fieri Facias issued, ordered Goods and Chattles, Lands & tenements of Jacob Helm, late of the Bailiwick, seized for "a Certain Debt" to James B. Armstrong; the 6 acres "remained in his [Sheriff's] hands Unsold for Want of buyers"; "the rents, Issues and profits of the Said Messuage...were Not of a Clear Yearly Value....Sufficient within the Space of Seven Years to Satisfy the debt & Damages in the said writ...."; Writ of Venditioni Exponas, issued 22 Apr. 1818, Sheriff exposed property to sale "by Public Vendue or Out Cry", 17 Aug. 1818; sold to Armstrong.

JACOB HELM HOUSE
(Callahan House)
HABS No. PA-1275 (Page 2)

- 1827 Deed: 7 May 1827 Recorded 7 May 1827
Book 7, page 359
James B. Armstrong, of Montague Township, Sussex County,
New Jersey
to
Robert Adams, Jr., of Township of Frankford, Sussex Co.,
New Jersey,
Consideration: \$1.00.
- 1861 Deed: 1 August 1861 Recorded 13 November 1861
Book 24, page 558
Alexander Adams, and Sarah Ann Newman, Administrators of
Estate of Ira B. Newman, late of Milford,
to
Elizabeth J. Leydle, formerly Elizabeth J. Cummings, of
Dingman Township, formerly of Delaware Township, Pa.,
Acreage: 6 acres.
Grant: Being the same parcel sold by Sheriff
Westbrook as the property of Jacob Helm, and
purchased by James B. Armstrong; became vested in
Ira B. Newman and ux., by divers deeds; 18 Dec.
1860, Elizabeth J. Cummings, now Leydle,
petitioned the Orphans Court... May, 1856, Parol
Contract, Ira Newman to sell her the 6 acres for
consideration: Andrew Adams became indebted to
the petitioner, decided to give her \$500., by
contributions from children and wife, if
petitioner canceled debt and invest funds in real
estate; Children, Alexander, Elenor, and Sarah
Ann, and petitioner agreed with Ira B. Newman
upon the premises, and money paid; Deed drawn 1
Apr. 1857, and receipt signed; since then, Ira B.
Newman in part, and others in part, have rented
the premises, from the petitioner; the petitioner
"has from time to time had the buildings and
premises repaired and improved"; Court ordered
Alexander Adams, et als., to give petitioner a
proper deed.
- 1905 Deed: 8 March 1905 Recorded 9 March 1905
Book 59, page 310
Elizabeth J. Leidel, of Dingman Township,
to
Ellen M. Cummins, of Delaware Township,

Consideration: \$2.00.
Acreage: (1) 6 (2) 16, 772 sq.ft. (3) 6 74/100 acres.
Grant: (1) same conveyed by Alexander Adams et als.,
1861; conveyed "upon the express condition that
Grantor shall have and keep the possession of the
dwelling house on the above described premises
and reside therein for and during her natural
life"; the grantee might not sell or encumber the
premises during life of grantor, but must reside
there and nurse the grantor, or the property
reverted to Elizabeth Leidel and heirs.

1914 Deed: 27 October 1914 Recorded 3 Nov. 1914
Book 68, page 187
Ellen M. Cummins, of Delaware Village, Warren County, New
Jersey,
to
Isabelle E. Hardenbergh, ux. and John P. Hardenbergh, of
Brooklyn, New York
Consideration: \$5.00.
Acreage: (1) 6 (2) 16, 772 sq.ft.
Grant: part of same premises conveyed to Ellen M.
Cummins by Elizabeth Leidel, 1905.

1914 Deed: 2 November 1914 Recorded 3 Nov. 1914
Book 68, page 188
Isabelle E. Hardenbergh and John P. Hardenbergh, of
Brooklyn, New York,
to
Harold Burnett, of Milford, Pa.
Consideration: \$5.00.
Acreage: (1) 6 (2) 16,772 sq.ft.
Grant: same as conveyed to Hardenberghs by Cummins,
1914; subject to mortgage given by Hardenberghs
to Cummins, 27 Oct. 1914.

1915 Deed: 2 September 1915 Recorded 21 Sept. 1915
Book 68, page 567
Ellen Cummins, of Delaware village,
to
Harold L. Burnett, of Milford, Pa.
Consideration: \$5.00.
Acreage: 1 acre.
Grant: part of premises conveyed to Ellen M.
Cummins by Elizabeth J. Leidel, 8
March 1905.

JACOB HELM HOUSE
(Callahan House)
HABS No. PA-1275 (Page 4)

- 1922 Deed: 1 September 1922 Recorded 5 Sept. 1922
Book 74, page 355
Harold L. Burnett, and Louise P., ux., of New York City,
to
Celine A.C. Schneider, widow, of same place,
Consideration: \$7,000.
Acreage: 8 64/100 acres.
Grant: Reference to 2 deeds, Hardenberghs to
Burnett, 1914, and Cummins to Burnett, 1915;
reference to "old Leidle House".
- 1937 Deed: 16 November 1937 Recorded 27 Nov. 1937
Book 92, page 113
Celine A.C. Schneider, of Milford, Pa.,
to
Ida S. and William M. Ford, of Oingman Township,
Consideration: \$1.00.
Acreage: 8 64/100 acres.
Grant: reference to survey by John Westbrook, 1922;
mention of "Old Leidel House", and a spoke mill
which formerly stood on portion of premises.
- 1957 Deed: 15 May 1957 Recorded 18 May 1957
Book 136, page 37
William M. Ford, widower, of Milford, Pa.,
to
Douglas J. and Eileen J. Callahan, of Maspeth, L.I.,
New York,
Consideration: \$18,000. (furnishings \$8,000.)
Acreage: 3.35 acres.
Grant: mention of "the 1 1/2 story frame dwelling house
on premises"; survey April 1957 by V. Paul
Struthers; part of premises conveyed by Celine
Schneider to Ida and William Ford, 1937; land
conveyed "together with all the furniture,
household furnishings, tools and equipment" and
"all good will of the said grantor, William M.
Ford, in conducting the tourist cabin enterprises
business...commonly known and called 'Glen Acres'
..."

3. Original plan and construction: In view of the fact that Jacob Helm owned nothing other than his six acres, it must be assumed that he resided on that lot, and therefore Helm may have constructed the first dwelling. The present structure may have begun as a one-room residence, and grown by lengthening it into the six-bay, one-room deep, one-and-a-half story structure standing today. According to local legend, the structure used to function as a tavern.
4. Alterations and additions: Most of the alterations in the house relate to modernization: William Ford built the small wing which now contains the kitchen, and he installed a bathroom in what used to be a central hall, eliminating one exterior door; the original staircase is intact, but has been covered by a more recent stair of less slope; the fireplaces in the basement have been sealed; and the present heating system was installed by Douglas Callahan, who removed a coal burning system.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Callahan, Douglas J. Interview, 11 August 1971. Milford, Pike County, Pennsylvania.

Prepared by Lynn Beebe Weaver
Historian
Historic American Building
Survey
August, 1971

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: Good example of early Upper Delaware Valley residential wood frame construction.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The one-and-one-half story structure measures 54' (six-bay front) x 18' (two bays) with a 9' x 18' modern addition.
2. Foundations: Random rubble stone.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The wood frame structure is covered with 5" exposed white clapboard siding.
4. Structural system, framing: Inaccessible.
5. Porches, stoops: A large porch runs the full length of the front elevation and extends approximately 6' from the face of the building. The floor is tongue-and-groove boards and the ceiling is wood planking with beaded ends. According to the present owners the porch was originally at the second level and what is now the basement was exposed as a first floor. The slope of the site suggests that this could have been possible.
6. Chimneys: There are two brick chimneys, one at each end, with the exterior fireplace stonework exposed on the first floor. This is characteristic of early houses of the area. In addition there is a modern concrete block chimney added by the present owner when modernization changes were made.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The original eight-panel front door contains its original hardware and is flanked by four-light sidelights. There is a side door on the west end connecting a small gabled roof anteroom with the main house. This small privy-like appendage supposedly served as a connecting link between the main house and a summer kitchen.
 - b. Windows and shutters: The windows throughout the house are two-over-two-light double-hung sash. There are five window openings across the front and two in the gable ends. Small eyebrow fixed windows are extant on the rear half-story elevation. These windows are a typical feature in the early wood frame dwellings in the area.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The tin covered gable roof appears to have been built in two parts as one-half of the roof is slightly-elevated. The modern wing has a shed roof.

b. Cornice, eaves: A simple eave with a small overhang.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: The first floor originally contained a central hallway, but now contains a bathroom. The exterior rear door was moved under the stairway to the left of the original opening. A narrow hallway connects the rooms on either side of the entry, each is approximately 20' x 20' with a fireplace on the end wall in each. In the rear of the house, is a modern addition.
 - b. Second floor: The upstairs is divided into four rooms, two on each side of the stairway. They have retained much of their original character.
 - c. Basement: The basement is reached by a central stair directly under the main stairway. It is divided into two rooms, one on either side of the stair. According to the present owner, the front wall of the basement was originally nearly on grade with an entry, with the lower level being used as a tavern. The large stone floor panels and plastered walls and ceiling suggest that this might have been the case.
2. Stairways: The stairway to the basement is original. The original stairway to the second floor is still in place but a modern stairway with less slope has been built directly over it.
 3. Flooring: Original wide board floor in all of upstairs and part of downstairs. The basement floor is concrete in one part and large stone panels in the other.
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Most walls and ceilings in the house are plaster covered with paper or are painted. The ceiling in the west room first floor contains a beaded board paneling.
 5. Doorways and doors: Most interior doorways and door appear to be original. The door frames on the first floor are beaded. Those upstairs are just simple frames.
 6. Decorative Features and Trim: Simply scrolled chair rail exists throughout the first floor. There is some detailing on fireplace mantels, first floor.
 7. Hardware: Front door is original with an early rim lock and slip latch. Long strap hinges are also in evidence.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. General Setting: The house faces 25° east of north along Route 209. The site slopes sharply in the front down to the Sawkill Creek which passes from west to east. There are several large trees which obscure the view of the house from the road (Route 209) about 30' away.
2. Outbuildings: There is a barn and several small cottages on the site. The barn and perhaps all but one of the cottages appear to be modern.

Prepared by John M. McRae
Project Supervisor
Historic American Buildings
Survey
August, 1971

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, supervised by the National Park Service and funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The project, which extended from 1967 to 1971, was under the general direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS. This structure was measured and drawn in the summer of 1971 under the direction of John M. McRae (University of Florida), Project Supervisor, by Jack L. Finglass (Carnegie-Mellon University), Martin J. Rosenblum (University of Illinois), architects, and Stephen J. Kirk (University of Kansas), student assistant architect, in the HABS field office at Columbia, New Jersey in the project area of the Tocks Island Reservoir and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. The historical data was written by Lynn Beebe Weaver, project historian in 1971. The written data was edited for transmittal to the Library of Congress in the summer of 1980 by Kent R. Newell of the HABS staff. The photographs were taken by George A. Eisenman in 1971.